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THE CRAYON.

NEW YORK, DECEMBER 19, 1855.

OUR SUBSCRIBERS who intend to continue their subscriptions to THE CRAYON the next year, are respectfully solicited to forward their subscriptions promptly, in order that we may regulate our edition accordingly. THE CRAYON commends itself to the family circle, as a valuable educational medium, in a field almost entirely new in this country, and as such, our readers are likely to find favor in, and aid the cause of Art, by extending a knowledge of it among their neighbors, thereby enlarging its sphere of usefulness.

TO ARTISTS.—We have to urge artists at home and abroad, as well as amateurs, learned and unlearned, to favor us with communications. We desire earnestly to have THE CRAYON the embodiment of the Art feeling and thought of the present time. Our columns are open to every mind whose feeling for the cause prompts a thought; the Editors reserve only the duty of deciding between positive interest and monotony. Will our artist friends and other interested think of this?

MRS. M. A. DENNISON is authorized to obtain subscribers for THE CRAYON.

Sketchings.

BROOKLYN.

It is a common practice abroad to admire the site of this or that city, its advantages, and its peculiar beauty, and it is not a common practice here to do the same with the like enthusiasm. Now, Brooklyn is one of the pleasantest cities in the world, and it is not surpassed by any in the United States. It is one of very few cities built upon elevated ground. It possesses great advantages both real and prospective for a city residence. Its streets are clean—indeed they could not well be otherwise, as nature performs a cleansing service which no corporation in this country can be made to do; for they incline in such a direction, that rains wash into the river all filth which would otherwise lay ungathered. What an advantage! Quiet, also, reigns there—no crowds in the day-time, or confusion at night. Occasionally an alarm of fire at night will produce ringing of bells, yells, and the clatter of machinery; but the diminuendo of this music soon runs to a point, and the ear loses it entirely. Brooklyn has pure air—pure and bracing; and, if cold in winter, much cooler in summer than the loaded atmosphere of its paternal rival, the Empire City. If, in winter, one is obliged to bend the body forward to resist a powerful blast from the north, there is compensation for it in summer, by inhaling the pure breezes from the Jersey hills, which, before they reach the Heights, are purified of all contamination with New York air. Cleanliness, quiet, and pure air! Who that loves life can do without them? Brooklyn has street-beauty too. Its streets are regular, and its houses are well built—some are princely—quite too much so for republican simplicity, and for the appreciation of them by their wealthy owners. Its churches, too, are a prominent feature—every style of architecture, and some remarkably fine specimens of their kind: color, material, taste, and fitness, are occasionally combined to impress the passer-by of their being a symbol of

truth, acting upon the hearts of many, perhaps, who never enter one to receive other impressions. But the material beauty of Brooklyn, in the shape of architecture, is not its greatest charm. A large number of the inhabitants of Brooklyn enjoy finer prospects than the people of any other city we know of. The houses on the west and south sides of Brooklyn being built upon an inclined plane rising up from the river, the inhabitants on each successive block look over their neighbor's roofs upon the bay, the shores of New Jersey, and Staten Island, and over all, the glorious western sky.

Who would not prize a dwelling from which the setting sun is visible, and where one can enjoy the soft light of the evening hours. Moonlight too, upon the broad expanse of glittering water, with myriads of colored lights, either stationary or gliding in the air, the dark hulls which bear them relieving upon the silvery sheet in sombre masses, or watch the boats moving about as they fly backward and forward, or motionless, resting at anchor before the long lines of lamps marking the neighboring city. Commend us to Brooklyn water scenery! Brooklyn too, has other fine prospects. Take a walk on the Heights, stand over the arch which spans Montague street—the curve of which is a great relief to the eye, and an innovation upon our angular tastes—and contemplate earth, sky, water, and man. Probably you will do it at noon-day, in the full flush of the blazing sun, and while the hive opposite is busiest. You do not see the bees, but you hear the roar of the hive—making honey and kicking out drones. You look down upon clipper ships at rest in the docks, or floating in the stream, dressed in gay streamers—upon every description of fast-sailing boats and slow ones, upon tugs, lighters, and barges, upon ferry-boats and row-boats, canal-boats and steamboats—you hear the hum of voices, the single and double stroke of the ferry-boat bell, the rattle of its chain, the distant steamer's bell, and perhaps the booming cannon, which for an instant silences the steady roar proceeding from behind the forest of masts, and from the midst of the immense pile of brick before you.

If inclined for a quiet city landscape, walk towards the skirts of Brooklyn and ascend "Fort Green," a hill from which the above is visible, but modified by distance and the absence of a noisy life. The eye takes in the Navy Yard and its massive ship-houses, the Naval Hospital, Wallabout Bay, and Williamsburg beyond. Turning to the south, the dome of the New York City Hall, and the spire of Trinity Church, appear beyond the steeples and houses of your foreground. Then comes Gowanus Bay and the green height of Greenwood, with Staten Island and Jersey in the distance. On a summer day, towards sunset, when the atmosphere is hazy—or dusty, if you will—all the same as it makes a glowing medium for the sun's rays—the effect of light and color is marvellously fine; the roofs of the city are indistinct and softened, the church spires are almost transparent in reflected light, and these, with the

bright sides of buildings facing the sun—the long shadows, and the dazzling surface of the distant water, make up a glowing city landscape which nowhere else can be had within the limits of so short a walk. Well do we recollect it. Commend us, we say again, to the Brooklyn side of New York!

There appeared in a public journal of Washington an article, detracting from the merit of the group at the eastern entrance to the capitol, by Horatio Greenough, and placing it in the scale of merit far below other statuary in the capitol. As to the competency of the criticism on their artistic merit, those having seen the statues referred to will draw their own conclusions. Statues are sometimes so far below mediocrity, that they are not worthy of criticism, as they indicate no talent or hope of improvement in the artist; whilst other works, though faulty, show talent or originality, and are severely criticised to the benefit of the artist. To be entitled to render a just decision on the merits of a statue or group, much good taste, a liberal mind, and the privilege of having seen fine works of Art, are required; those possessing these advantages know where to point out the merits or demerits, or be silent. The writer of the article referred to selects the group in relief, in the panel over the door leading from the Rotunda to the Hall of Representatives, as the best work of genius of the kind in Washington. It is not even the best production in the Rotunda: the drawing is decidedly bad; the spinal column of the Indian wielding the tomahawk is passing up the side, instead of the centre of the back; and Col. Boone's figure is dislocated. The drawing of these figures shows great exaggeration in the muscles and inaccuracies in their anatomy.

Legislators and high functionaries of the government may select a subject desired to be represented in statuary; but when they are required to choose the most talented artist, they find themselves at fault, except in rare instances. This difficulty of selecting proper artists, was felt by the British Government, until it was decided to refer the choice to the Royal Academy. The artists whom they recommended were employed, and thus was insured the selection of the very best talent, without reference to nationality, excepting where the king intervened, which was but in few instances. We have not a national academy, but we have that which will answer our purpose as well, namely, the National Academy of Design, in New York, which can boast of many able artists as members.

When Congress desire, works of Art, let the subject be referred to a committee, who can readily communicate with the Academy, and receive the desired information as to the artists who have acquired sufficient eminence to be entitled to employment from the government. This will ensure success, and be a precautionary step, which will not be regretted. It is supposed that Congress employs the best talent, and that the work executed for them is a fair specimen of the state of the Art for that period.

In sculpture, America can boast of its native talent already cultivated, such as Crawford, Powers, Hart, and others, although compelled to seek employment in Italy. If Congress will require their works of Art to be executed in Washington, it will do more towards developing the now dormant talent than the introduction of many statues from abroad. The accessories of the studio will follow the artists, and the present want of assistants will be remedied. We have plenty of marble—give us the operatives, and we will progress. It may be said, where are the antiques to study and cultivate our tastes? We answer, in Europe, where they will remain; and we must be satisfied with casts therefrom. Take from Italian artists the

patronage of foreigners, and in a few years Italy would have few artists. Why should we not have our works done at home? Why not induce the artists, native and foreign, to settle among us, and thus surmount all difficulties, and take a high position? Every subject selected well, if offered to several artists for designs and models, be handled differently, both in conception and execution. The artist possessing a cultivated mind, beyond the mere mechanical part of his art, will handle his subject in such a manner as to give the proper feeling required to perpetuate the event desired; whereas another, who may be equally competent to copy nature, cannot conceive the attitude and grouping necessary to show a high state of refinement. A work may be overwrought where action is required; or be too tame where composure or dignity is desired. Had the subjects given for the reliefs in the Rotunda been designed by more skillful artists, some of them would not have been so gross, and told a tale at the recital of which philanthropists shudder. Although their lands were necessary to us, yet do not hand down to posterity, by having it sculptured in stone on the very walls of the Rotunda of the capitol, our deeds of oppression towards the Aborigines. How plainly it was read by the Indian, who, with a representative, walking through the splendid halls and admiring the grandeur of the majestic pile, turned with energy to the representative and said, "See, over that eastern door, we are represented receiving you as brothers, and offering you food, and there (pointing to the northern door), you are making a treaty of friendship with us; and over that western door, we are represented as saving your life; whilst over the last, which leads to the Hall of Representatives, you are rewarding us by taking our lives." This little incident has been mentioned to show how far superior Greenough's design is; it can never be so severely criticised by our Aborigines. It is refined, chaste, and beautiful, and decidedly to the point, but evidently not understood by the writer of the article referred to. A female and child, wife of a pioneer of the far west, is wending her way through the forests; being weary, she rests on the side of a rock; whilst stealthily, and unobserved by her, a savage approaches within striking distance, his tomahawk uplifted and ready to descend. A powerful and hardy hunter, equally unobserved, approaches the Indian, and immediately pinions him by the arms, and holds him as firmly as though bound with withes—evincing in the entire group a beautiful conception, far above the level of ordinary critics. The figure of the female is chaste and beautiful in the extreme; the face is exquisite—may read volumes in the countenance; she does not know that the Indian is near her: her thoughts are with her children far away in her cabin; she is weary and thoughtful; perhaps the idea of a prowling savage may cross her mind. The Indian is paralyzed; he is affected by a power beyond his conception, as he is grasped by the arms from behind, and drawn against the chest of the hunter; his head is thrown back, and looks upwards into the face of the white man in search of the cause of so powerful and instantaneous an action. This figure is good in its anatomy and artistic arrangement: the muscles are those of an Indian, without exaggeration or distortion, but decidedly showing sudden suspension of intended violent action. The figure of the hunter is a fair specimen of a noble and daring pioneer. A perfect Apollo in dignity and figure, his finely-chiselled face does not express any feeling of doubt of success, or hope of reward—it is noble and manly. He, like Apollo, knows his power; hence, like Apollo, you find no expression of fear or anxiety. Had the hunter with his knife pierced the heart of the Indian, it would have sacrificed the female; the hand that was already descending

with the deadly tomahawk would, as the knife reached the heart, have fallen convulsively more powerful in his death-struggle, and the group would have presented a tragedy unfit for a position in or near the capitol—an Indian and a female in the agonies of death, only to be looked at with horror, and unworthy to be added to the sculptured records of our history. The inquiry about the breed of dog, and why he is not in a more ferocious attitude, may be answered by saying that the dog is simply an accessory, which, without injuring the group, gives the pyramidal form so desirable in statuary. It was not intended that the eye should be taken from the group to examine that which merely gives it form. What! would the critic desire to have the dog lacerating the limbs of the Indian? This would be a spectacle certainly not fit for the eyes of a civilized age, or necessary for a full representation of the event which it is intended to perpetuate. When a hunter advances on his prey, his dog is taught to keep still or back until his services are required. If there is anything amiss in the dog, it is that too much labor has been bestowed upon it. A writer in one of the city papers, previous to the unpacking of the group, which it was hidden from sight by thick planks, observed "that the spirit of the dog redeemed the group." This critic differs. An accessory has little labor bestowed on it, as it takes from the effect of the principal object. In the inimitable group of the Laocoon, the serpent is roughly chiselled, that it might not take from the effect of the figures; not that the artist could not chisel the serpent perfectly with all its scales and undulations, but that the eye should pass it by, and rest on the principal figures. As Greenough has managed the group the story is plainly told, and the feelings of the beholder are not pained, but left calmly to admire the beautiful work of Art. As respects Greenough's statue of Washington, we may say it is rather in advance of its age. Washington was a great and extraordinary man, possessing great wisdom and control over himself—the peculiar gift of God to this nation for a wise purpose. He was admired and venerated by emperors and kings, in common with all men. Previous to his day, the world had not required such a man, and perhaps will not again for centuries. Greenough, fully appreciating the man he was to represent in marble, uncovered his bosom and represented it as it should be, unencumbered, pure, noble, and grand, not requiring the garb of fashion of any age. He merely covered such parts of the figure with drapery as a proper regard for a high state of refinement in the arts required. This statue was not intended for our day; posterity must weigh the opinions of its contemporaries, and judge of its merits; and, whilst other works sink into insignificance, it may rise in estimation. Had this statue been placed upon the east portico, immediately over the door entering the Rotunda, the effect would have been imposing. On ascending the steps, each legislator would look up to and pass under it; and if he had one particle of patriotism, he would, when he entered the hall, have thought of the great original, and, like him, of his country and his country's good.

W. J. STONE.

BEAUTY AND DEFORMITY—AN OFFER.

I hail the advent and continuance of THE CRAYON as a step forward in our national history. If we can sustain a paper devoted entirely to the culture of Art and taste, there is hope for us yet.

We have been told the reasons why we fail in points of taste; that we are a many people, and have little time, or think we have little to cultivate these things; and having formed the habit when we were too busy, of letting others think for us, we have lost our boasted indepen-

dence, and are content still to be led and dictated to by others. We take customs and fashions sent to us, or invented for us, and follow blindly wherever they lead us.

As a matter of taste, this is to be deprecated. We ought to have a taste as a people; and our own judgment, as to what is required by our air, and climate, and means, ought to be better than that of any one on the other side of the water.

Still, we would not quarrel so much with our present course, were the evil confined only to a question of taste. Our dress might be stiff and ungraceful, and the lines of beauty wholly neglected or defaced, our movement might be constrained and restrained, our dresses too long to walk in, our bonnets not answering any earthly purpose of shade or covering, and our arms tied down by unnatural ligatures at the shoulders.

But when these things attack our health, it is a more serious affair. It is not enough that our spindle, wasp waists are a positive deformity, it is an evil beginning to awaken serious attention that the long, stiff, tight waists, compressing the stomach and lungs, and crowding out of place the whole internal organization, are destroying the health and the lives of women by thousands.

These unnatural forms, as they are sometimes developed, remind us strongly of the painful constriction of our city trees, when the opening in the pavement is not large enough for their growth. The sharp edge of the stone presses against them. Grow they must, so they calmly crowd their way, pushing the stone if it will yield; if not, pressing out above and below it, unnaturally indeed, but still better than to be checked in its growth.

So the lungs, bless them! will have room. It had been well if they had been girded by bands of iron and steel, for their protection, but since they have only yielding bones and cartilage, they must work for their existence. So, with their power of expansion they make themselves room. Like the tree, if they are crowded on one side, they press out on the other; if they have not room below, they will take it above. We have seen a very fair proportion of the lungs pushing out at the shoulder-blades and the back of the neck, and the rise and fall of the shoulders in breathing, showed that when one set of muscles was bound hand and foot, another set stood ready to do their work in helping to breathe.

A minor subject, but not unimportant in this connection, is the pinching of the feet. Somebody in the "Home Journal," which ought to be a paper of taste, praises a "taper foot." Where ever was seen a taper foot in Nature?

The deformity of our national foot is positively painful, pinched and mis-shapen, and grown out at the joints, because they must have room somewhere; *corns* so prevalent as to have given rise to a profession, Chiropodists, and all because we have a national, standard foot, different from that which the God of nature has given us, and wear laboring to bring every foot to that standard.

How many do not walk, because their shoes hurt them! How many do walk in agony, with tight shoes, and speak of it as a painful evil, but unavoidable. Sum up the aggregate of self-inflicted suffering each day!

How many ugly, mis-shapen feet do you see, tortured into the most painful distortion! How many suffer from cold feet and imperfect circulation, through the tight pressure on the veins.

Our national gait is bad; we hobble rather than walk, and the new fashion of high heels increases the evil, crowding the foot forward, pressing still more upon the toes, and destroying all elasticity and freedom of motion.

Imagine an artist looking for a model foot for a statue. A child's, he might find, but the foot of a full grown man or woman, never!

We hardly think he could find a model in all New York.

We have long wished to make a suggestion to some artist—indeed, to two. First, to an artist in shoes, to make the sole of the shoe broad enough for the foot to rest upon, and the upper part of the shoe wide enough and full enough to leave the toes in their natural position and freedom. The present taste might rebel, but it might also be won to reason, taste and comfort.

The other suggestion, and the more hopeful one, is to some artist, to model two statuesque, one in the proportions of the Venus di Medici, or any perfect standard; the other with the waist and feet of a modern belle, the flat, chest, high shoulders, full shoulder-blades and the general hour-glass form. They should be draped, but showing the contrast fully.

We hope to see this accomplished; and now, hereby, as an encouragement to the artist, we engage a pair on the spot, and we, S. T. J., also engage, if we can possibly afford it, a pair to be placed in every boarding school within our reach. S. T. J.

56 IRVING PLACE, Dec. 10, 1855.

DEAR CRAYON:—I enclose you a short notice just received from Cincinnati, which explains itself, and which I do not doubt you will give a place in your columns. Is it not very interesting to see a city—whose oldest living inhabitant saw it a village of log houses, now exceeding the oldest of our American cities in the number of distinguished artists it has contributed to the country, and in the interest which its people feel in the Fine Arts? I recently had the pleasure of visiting the gallery referred to in the enclosed communication, and can testify to the zeal and success which have attended the efforts of its fair friends. The plan of having good confessed copies of the best pictures, instead of sham originals—pictures that have little resemblance to the old masters except in dirtiness—seems worthy of general acceptance; while good casts of the great works of statuary, are vastly preferable to marble monsters, and costly originals without merit. Can it be that the West is going to shame the indifference to Art in the East?

Yours truly,

H. W. BELOWS.

Thinking that your readers would be interested in the state of art in a sister city, I send you a slight sketch of an institution which is rising into notice in Cincinnati, and which reflects honor on the city and the individuals to whose energy and liberality it owes its existence. This is the Lady's Academy of Fine Arts, which has been established solely by the efforts of some few ladies of Cincinnati, who coveted for their city some place of resort where the æsthetic part of our nature might receive nourishment and refinement.

Some two years ago, a few ladies met to organize the Institution. The plan proposed was to raise funds, by yearly subscriptions of five dollars each, which money was to be appropriated to the obtaining copies of the great pictures of Europe, copies made by the best artists of the present time, which might transmit to us as much as possible of the spirit of their great originals.

The great financial crisis of last year impeded very much the progress of the Institution, but the energy of the managers has so far triumphed over difficulties that the academy is now opened, in a small but very attractive hall, admirably lighted, and is a constantly attended place of resort for our citizens. The Academy has now some very beautiful pictures, and is daily receiving others, among which are such masterpieces as the Holy Family, presented by Raphael to Francis the First, Murillo's Virgin of Seville. The ———, a landscape by Nicolas Poussin, Vandyke's portrait of Charles I., and the beautiful *Vierge au Voile*, Raphael's loveliest conception of the Virgin and Child. A copy of Raphael's great fresco at the Vatican.

The School of Athens, or, as it is sometimes styled, "Philosophy," is also being made for the academy, by M. Balze, an artist who has twice before been employed by the French government to copy this great picture.

The copy, which is to be two-thirds the size of the original, will be finished in March, 1856, and will be an honor, not only to Cincinnati, but to our country.

The Academy has also, through the liberality of Charles McKim, Esq., of Cincinnati, a collection of casts from the antique, superior to any in the country, being carefully prepared casts of the great statues of the world. The Apollo, the Venus de Medicis, the Venus of Milo, Diana and her Fawn, Silenus and the Infant Hercules, the Gladiator, all the full size of the originals, with many others, small-sized, but very perfect casts.

Such an Institution as this is a worthy example to other cities, and a proof that a higher taste is rising among us, a taste for something above the mere luxuries which wealth can command, a love for the Beautiful and True in Art.

To the Editors of the Crayon:

SIR:—I would be exceedingly obliged to you for the following information: Under what circumstances, on what conditions, and at what time, may a young man gain admittance to the "Academy of Fine Arts" in New York City? This information would reach me either through the columns of THE CRAYON, or by a letter addressed to

Yours respectfully,

H.

The schools of the National Academy of Design, in this city, are open every evening; students may obtain admittance there by making a drawing from a cast, which, if the Council deem indicative of a knowledge of drawing sufficient to show that the candidate is able to avail himself of the advantages of the school, he will be admitted. The charge is Five Dollars for the Winter.

THE SCHOOL OF DESIGN FOR WOMEN is now located in Broome street, as will be noticed in the advertisement in another part of our paper. We have seen specimens of engraving on wood executed by those who are learning and practicing that branch of Art in this school, and they are very creditable both to the Art and to the skill of the engravers. There is no reason why females should not find in the profession of wood-engraving constant and lucrative employment. It is adapted to their powers, physical especially, and it is a medium for the display of much skill and taste. As for offering a permanent occupation, there seems to be no doubt but the demand for wood-engravings will be much increased, as no branch of engraving or drawing seems to be so extensively used. We hope soon to give further particulars of this excellent institution.

We give this week a number of deferred articles, two of which are printed by request. We would call special attention to the "Washington Portraiture," by one who speaks authoritatively, G. W. P. Custis, Esq., the venerable representative of the Washington family. We think it will set at rest all doubts concerning the originality, as well as value, of the various Washington portraits. The pictures themselves (so far as we have seen them), in certain unmis-

takeable characteristics, confirm the facts stated in this paper by Mr. Custis.

BOOKS RECEIVED.

From Messrs. Ticknor & Co., "*The Life of Goethe*," by G. H. Lewes; 2 vols. "*Men and Women*," by Robert Browning.

From Messrs. Fowler & Wells, "*The Kansas Region*," by Max Greene.

THE COLOSSAL WASHINGTON MONUMENT.—The casting of the horse for this monument, at Munich, is one of the great feats of modern foundry, as fifteen tons of bronze had to be melted and kept in a state of fluidity. For several days and nights previously a large fire was at these huge masses, which required to be stirred at times. When the bronze was liquified an ultimate essay was made in a small trial cast, and to heighten the color some more copper was added. Successively all the chambers through which the metal had to flow in the form were cleared of the coal with which they had been kept warm, and the master examined all the air spiracles and the issues of the metal; the props of the tubes were then placed, and every man had his duty and place assigned him. Finally the master, amid the intense expectation of the many art amateurs present, pronounced the words, "In the name of God," and then three mighty strokes opened the fiery gulf, out of which the glowing metal flowed in a circuit to the large form. The sight was magnificent; and in the little sea of fire stood the master, and gave his commands about the successive opening of the props. Hot vapor poured from the air spiracles; in the conduits the metal boiled in waves; still, no decision yet, as the influx of the bronze in the very veins of the figure could be but slow. At once flaming showers jumped out of the air conduits, and the master proclaimed the cast to have succeeded. A loud cheer followed, when the master approached Mr. Crawford, the artist of the Washington Monument, to congratulate him on this success. Another cheer was given to M. de Miller, the chief of the royal foundry of Munich, who had personally conducted the work.—*The Builder*.

WOMEN AND PICTURES.—If, indeed, women were mere outside, form and face only, and if mind made up no part of her composition, it would follow that a ball-room was quite as appropriate a place for choosing a wife, as an exhibition room for choosing a picture. But, inasmuch as women are not mere portraits, their value not being determinable by a glance of the eye, it follows that a different mode of appreciating their value, and a different place for viewing them antecedent to their being individually selected, is desirable. The two cases differ also in this, that if a man select a picture for himself from among all its exhibited competitors, and bring it to its own house, the picture being passive, he is able to fix it there: while the wife, picked up at a public place, and accustomed to incessant display, will not, it is probable, when brought home, stick so quietly to the spot where he fixes her, but will escape to the exhibition room again, and continue to be displayed at every subsequent exhibition, just as if she were not become private property, and had never been definitely disposed of.—*Hannah More*.

It will certainly be found with all the senses, that they individually receive the greatest and purest pleasure when they are in right condition and degree of subordination to all the rest, and that by the over cultivation of any one (for morbid sources of pleasure and correspondent temptations to irrational indulgence, confessedly are attached to all), we shall add more to their power as instruments of punishment than of pleasure.—*Ruskin*.